

From the mess that we made  
by hushedgreylily

Category: Jurassic Park  
Genre: Friendship, Romance  
Language: English  
Characters: Barry, Claire, Owen  
Status: Completed  
Published: 2016-04-12 00:23:38  
Updated: 2016-04-17 00:56:09  
Packaged: 2016-04-27 19:36:23  
Rating: T  
Chapters: 2  
Words: 6,002  
Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: In which nothing seems to change after everything that happened, Claire and Owen find themselves stuck in a stalemate, and Claire is driven to share her feelings. Two parts.

## 1. Part One

\*\*FROM THE MESS THAT WE MADE\*\*

\*\*Nothing seems to change after everything that happened, and Claire and Owen find themselves stuck in a stalemate. Two parts.\*\*

\*\*I feel stupid commenting on spoilers for JW, but spoilers even so.\*\*

\*\*Doesn't belong to me. Although I'm considering putting an offer in on Chris Pratt, anyone know the asking price?\*\*

He realises about twenty minutes after the boat docks on the mainland that he has nowhere to stay â€“ his bungalow is probably overrun by pteranodons by now, and until he can get to a bank and figure out how to get his hands on his last few months of salary, he's got nothing but the (very dirty) clothes on his back. He lost Claire somewhere between \_for survival \_in the bunker and the boat docking; he assumes she's with a very fraught Karen and Scott and the boys. He supposes they need their space right now, and anyway, he has \_no idea \_quite what's going on there, for all his confidence and surety. Hell, he hadn't even started \_liking \_her until at some point in the last 24 hours, and now there's something twisting in his gut as the image of her running, total desperation on her face and the tyrannosaurus on her heels flashes through his mind.

Sure, he had been attracted to her. Her painfully precise red bob, the almost violently white suits, seemingly acres of pale, unblemished skin â€“ he'd had to have been mad not to have had something of a reaction. And as for those shoesâ€¦ he'd never known

he was such a skirt and heels man before Claire Dearing. But after their disaster of an almost date, all the evidence that piled up in barely half an hour that they were so incompatible with each other it was nearing ridiculous, and Claire's ludicrous itinerary, he'd stepped back. He'd been going to count it as one of those things that was never actually going to work, and she'd maybe still have cropped up for years to come in particularly drunken dreams, but she'd always been going to be an impossibility. And then everything had imploded, and suddenly she'd been beside him when he didn't even dare breathe, she'd been pressing her forehead against his under a log, gripping his arm like he was her last lifeline, and she'd been pressing into him however briefly, teeth and lips colliding in seconds of his shocked, passionate thanks. And then her lost, helpless sounding question in the bunker, and her tiny, more than adorable smile to his response — suddenly he was so confused. Because he wasn't supposed to even like her, and in what felt like an instant he was considering stupid things like futures with the girl who was still his complete opposite, still probably hated him in the light of day, so to speak, and had to still be one half of the most disastrous first date he'd ever have in his life.

He runs a dirty hand through dirty hair, frowning slightly. That's all still too confusing to think about, right now, and anyway, he has more practical worries at the moment. Like how he's going to prevent homelessness — the steepest possible decline from raptor trainer at the world's most successful theme park. Because right now all his muscles seem to be aching, and all he wants really is to curl up somewhere, preferably somewhere cushioned. He wants (probably needs) as many hours of uninterrupted sleep as he can lay his hands on — he needs a complete \_blank. \_He needs to lie there and not think, for however long is necessary. Until he can make some sense of everything that's happened. Now he's not fighting tooth and nail to stay alive to see the next minute, everything's building up, stacking as if ready to be \_thought about. \_And he's nowhere near ready, yet, to think about any of it. So he needs somewhere to sleep until he's ready to think.

Or a long, stiff drink.

He finds a bar before he finds a bank, and a bar with Barry sat in the window, it turns out. With an exhausted half smile, he takes a pew next to his old friend. Barry doesn't say anything for a while, and then lets out a deep sigh.

"I'm guessing you've not got anywhere to go?"

\* \* \*

><p>He puts up on Barry's ragged, slightly-too-short second hand couch in his tiny one bedroom studio flat, that he'd had and never lived in for years now. And his old friend lends him a couple hundred dollars, and he manages to build himself some kind of haphazard, makeshift <em>normality <em>again, within 48 hours.

He hardly even lets himself wonder where Claire is. Sure, he'd promised 'sticking together' and he'd let his heart swell a little at the thought of her, at the more vulnerable, \_human \_side of her he'd had a chance to see, but he supposes when they fell back into reality, the world came crashing down around them again. The world where they were near enough completely incompatible.

Only three days into his stay, Barry's cheap-for-a-reason studio flat springs a leak in the major plumbing, and his friend sighs at him and announces he's going to go back to the mainland, see if he can build bridges with his estranged almost-ex wife.

Owen forces something of a smile and tells Barry he'll find somewhere to stay, even managing a dry laugh he says maybe this is the kick in the teeth he needs to start trying harder to get hold of some of his money, to start rebuilding. He excuses himself, makes out he's going to start putting his life in order again, and ends up in the pub, an Irish bar just around the corner.

And who does he find there but a plucky red head, a few too many drinks in her already, sitting on a bar stool, swinging her legs slightly. She raises an eyebrow slightly as she sees him walk in, and glances at the empty bar stool next to her, maybe something of a reflex. He sits next to her, gesturing at the barman to come over.

"I didn't think this sort of place was your scene, Claire." He laughs, "Bourbon on the rocks." He nods at the bartender. Claire's eyebrow shoots a lot higher, but she doesn't say anything. He changes tack.

"How are the boys?"

That's something of a frown. "Karen and Scott took them home yesterday. It's Zach, actually, that's struggling more. He's not talking to anyone, it's like he refuses to admit it's eating him up inside, andâ€œ" she trails off, looking down at her hands for a moment. "I don't think there's anything anyone can do â€“ I guess it's gonna take time."

Owen gives her a half smile. "And you? How are you holding up?"

She looks pointedly at the almost empty vodka tonic on the bar in front of her. "Between not really sleeping, ignoring something like a thousand phone calls from the press every day and still being under contract with Masrani Global, fine thanks." She chuckles, dryly.  
"You?"

"And there was me thinking the reason I wasn't sleeping was Barry's couchâ€œ!"

She can't help her smile widening, and she brings her eyes up to meet his. "You're on Barry's couch?"

He laughs, taking a long drink. "Was. One of the pipes went this morning, and Barry's decided he's going back to Maine to see if the dinosaurs have made his wife realise she'd rather have him safe at home, or something like thatâ€œ! He's leant me some cash, I'll get a hotel room somewhere, and then when I can get my hands on the money from InGen I'll have to find a placeâ€œ|somewhereâ€œ|" he trails off, looking slightly absently beyond her face. The thought of finding somewhere new to call home, setting up somewhere completely different is maybe scarier than he thought.

Claire frowns. "InGen's financial situation isn't looking that good right now, that salary might be a whileâ€œ| you thought about where,

yet?"

He shakes his head. "I've hardly thought about anything, Claire. I've been trying \_not to think, \_that's been more me the last few daysâ€|"

She looks down again, takes a deep breath, and suddenly, when she meets his eyes again, she looks \_shy.\_

"I've got a place in Jacksonville."

He raises an eyebrow.

"It's got a nice, comfy couch. I mean, if you wanted toâ€| if you needed toâ€| I don't mean, I-"

Considering the immense value of the moment he witnesses Claire Dearing struggling to put a sentence together, Owen puts her out of her misery. "That would be amazing. If you're sure that's alright."

She looks somewhere midway between sure this is what she wants to happen and completely horrified at herself for asking. "I'm sure." She muses for a second that that vodka's gone straight to her head. "I think we're friends, now, right? I'm just helping out a friend."

\* \* \*

><p>He spends most of Barry's money on a cheap Costa Rica equivalent of a motel, and only has just enough left over for the flight to Jacksonville. He flies coach and Claire flies first class, and he supposes, musing quietly to himself whilst they're in the air, that that just about sums it up. Anything that they ever weren't really yet and could ever have been â€“ he'd be making Claire fly coach. And he wasn't prepared to do that. The unveiling of her <em>human <em>side to him had only made him \_care, \_and now he cared he couldn't do that to her.

The apartment in Jacksonville is somehow perfect. Despite its expensive dÃ©cor, and the fact that it is a penthouse suite of a modest sized building, it isn't too big. The 'couch' was theoretical, though, and Claire directs him to and orders him to set up in the spare bedroom as soon as he arrives. He starts to say something about rent, but she just frowns at him.

"Maybe when someone's finally made InGen release all that money, and you've found yourself a job. But not before. I don't know what you think of me, Owen, but I'm not going to claim rent off a friend without an income!"

She's taking to using the term \_friend a \_lot. And he's ok with that. But \_I don't know what you think of me \_makes him smile as she leaves the room. She really does have no idea.

\* \* \*

><p>They reach an impasse, then, seemingly settle. Owen finds a job with Jacksonville Conservation Centre quickly, and Claire takes another post with Masrani Global, despite the loss of its CEO and

namesake, in the construction of a new shopping mall just outside the city. Owen starts stocking the fridge and paying more than half of the bills, and they leave it at that, for now. Conversation never turns to it possibly not being a long term agreement â€“ when Owen's going to become established enough to find a place of his own doesn't cross either of their minds. It's maybe something of a safety thing; they feel *comfortable* *together*. And maybe they're not ready to move on from that.

Owen (slightly defeated, admittedly), thinks he needs to come to terms with the fact that he's never going to be the right sort of man for her. He's never going to be enough, he's never going to fit. He can think of a thousand reasons he's never going to be good enough, and he'd rather not go through them. All the same, he dreads the day she finds herself a perfect, handsome, clean shaven and fresh smelling business executive or something, with three languages under his belt, a flawless and progressive employment record and a need to write itineraries. Or something like that. Because then he'll have to move out, and move on, and he's not sure he's ready to do that. A few seconds in the heat of a moment in which they both thought they were going to die has proven to be something like the first taste of a drug. There's no looking back, and he's not had enough.

Claire, on the other hand, wonders more frequently than she'd like to admit why nothing ever came of that same moment, and has drawn the conclusion that perhaps it was one of those things in a high pressure situation that was never going to come to anything now they were back in the real world. She's normally very rational, she's normally very good at analysing the facts and coming to an educated, evidence-based conclusion, but somehow with this she can't seem to make two and two make four. Because although she can make a list of all the reasons she shouldn't be with Owen, all the things about him she shouldn't like, she should realise wouldn't fit, she can't seem to put the possibilities into storage in her head. She can't seem to let them go.

So they go on, they co-exist, they grow closer. Living together does that to people, under whatever circumstances. Owen finds himself wryly thinking that possibly he's allowing himself to be friend-zoned, slouching on the couch with her feet in his lap after a long day, not blinking when she walks into the room with her hair tied up in a towel on her head, a green cucumber facemask on her features, stealing a slice of pizza from the box in front of her. But he figures if he's never going to be the right man for her, he's going to be the best friend. He's going to be everything he can be that she needs, whatever it is.

On his own, though, and with a few beers in his system, he can't stop thinking about her like that. He remembers fast beating hearts, the taste of strong, good quality coffee and mint toothpaste on her lips, and the slightest hint of vanilla in that smell that was so inexplicably Claire. The first time he dreams about her, she's suddenly crashing her lips against his again and tossing layers of her clothing in all directions, slipping between his sheets, pressing every inch of herself against himâ€| he wakes in a cold sweat, hoping and praying he hadn't been calling her name quite like that in the real world.

They don't talk about 'the incident'. It's like Jurassic World never happened, and they're close friends for reasons slightly less

dramatic " which is ridiculous, really, he supposes, because it would never have occurred to either of them they might get on this well without the intensity of lives hanging in the balance " that happen to be living together. He doesn't dream about it, his body's more programmed to nights of lying wide-eyed, awake, and unable to stop thinking about it. He's not sure she has the nightmares, anymore. The first month or so they lived there, he heard her whimper and half-scream in the night, with 'run' or 'more teeth' escaping her lips, and every time he'd argued with himself whether to go in and comfort her, but the side of him that thought she'd be better off not knowing he'd heard anything always won out over the side of him that wanted, more than anything, to wrap his arms around her until the fear subsided. But he hasn't heard anything like that for a long time. Maybe (hopefully) she's clawing her way back up to the hypothetical surface, as he was.

Then one early evening, they realise they're running out of milk, and he goes out to get some. When he comes back in, his loosely strung and slightly haphazard new reality collapses.

Claire's still sat at the sofa, on her laptop, where he left her. She's staring at the screen, as if she's not really looking at anything, now, and there are tears running down and dripping off her face, and she's seemingly unperturbed. She doesn't look like she's even noticed. For a moment, he freezes. Because this is so unexpected, yet if he's completely honest with himself, something like this has been building up ever since they left an island that had claimed the lives of so many, not allowing themselves to look back.

Then she gives a huge, choking sob, not taking her eyes off the screen in front of her, but her shoulders shaking. He sets the milk down, starts to move towards her, and she looks up at him, an expression of something close to complete and utter hopelessness on her face.

"Zara was getting married tomorrow" she half-whispers, looking almost incredulous. "Of all the things that my calendar on this could remember and decide to remind me!"

He crouches next to her, placing a hand on her knee. "Claire, I-"

She interrupts him. "That day." She takes a deep breath. "Iâ€| I can'tâ€|"

"It's ok." He soothes, reaching his other hand to stroke through her hair, along the side of her face.

She shakes her head. "It's not, though. So many people died, and I-"

"It wasn't your fault." He fires back, suddenly reading some sort of self-criticism in her eyes.

The look she gives him after that is almost pitying. "It was though, Owen. Part of it. There were so many times I could have tried to make them stop, there were so many times I should have realised thatâ€| that thing was a terrible ideaâ€|"

He looks down for a moment, because she's not entirely wrong. He doesn't look back at her until he can be sure there's nothing but confidence in his eyes. Confidence in her, confidence in what he's saying, perhaps in the fact that he can comfort her in this seemingly \_hopeless \_situation. "Hindsight is a wonderful thing. You can't keep looking back. You're not going to change anything. You have to look forward. At what you're going to build on the other side of everything. You've got to think of it as something that you got to the other side of."

Her eyes widen slightly, and she sighs, and he's pretty sure the tears have stopped coming, but her cheeks are still wet.

"I hear their screams." She breathes, and she somehow sounds like a child. "Every night."

It's all so miserable, so disheartening. He doesn't have anything to say to that, but he suddenly realises how close they've come â€“ they're inches away from one another, his hand's still lingering on her cheek, and her breathing's shallow and fast.

He leans a little closer, letting his thumb move very slightly on her cheek. She bites her lip, and he's sure her eyes dart down to his lips, if only for a moment. In that moment, there's only one thing to do. He leans in, and presses his lips against hers.

For a moment, she's like a statue, and he feels his heart sinking. She's not going to react, he's read her wrong, he's ruined everything, they're never going to get past this. This isn't going to be something he's going to be able to erase. He starts to pull back and starts formulating his sincere and ashamed apology in his mind, when hands claw at his neck and tug him roughly back towards her, her mouth opening and her teeth clashing against his. Her tongue's dancing in his mouth, all of a sudden, and she's pulling him further, leaning back against the sofa cushions, dragging him up and on top of her.

Breathlessly, he pulls back. "Claireâ€|"

She gives him the same look she gave the board shorts, the bottle of tequila he bought with him when he moved in, and the night he suggested they stay up and watch the wrestling.

He starts to say something anyway, but she pulls him roughly back down. She still tastes a little of coffee, but there's something else there too, something \_fruity\_, and one of her hands is sliding down his chest and reaching for the buckle of his jeans before he can form a coherent thought. He considers maybe this is what she needs right now. He levers himself right on top of her on the couch, his hands suddenly as desperate as his mouth to find every inch of her pale, blemish-free skin, breathing becoming merely an afterthought.

The first time doesn't last long. They're on a couch, like a pair of teenagers, and they suddenly find themselves so desperate there doesn't seem anything worth prolonging it for. She crashes around him, gasping, and he follows shortly after. They lie, panting, for moments until she props her head up on his chest â€“ she's somehow found herself curled around his side, now â€“ and smiles, tracing circles with her finger on his skin.

"Come to bed?" she whispers, looking up at him from under her eyelashes. Silently, he follows her tracing fingers as she eases herself off the couch â€“ he takes a moment to consider how vigorously she's going to clean it when she comes to her senses â€“ and leads him through into her bedroom.

It smells like Claire, her bedroom, he's always thought that, and the sheets are no exception. He's hit with the waft of vanilla as she pushes him down on a pillow, pressing her mouth against his, starting everything all over again. He's hardly had a chance to catch his breath, but he's not going to complain. This is far better than any of those dreams.

\*\*Hope you enjoyed, let me know what you think! The second part will be up in a few days!\*\*

## 2. Part Two

\*\*Here we go, hope you enjoy this one too! I'm bringing in the angst for a while, please accept my apologies :)\*\*

\*\*This is for kamarooka, who's the only one reassuring me I'm not sending this all into thin air! Leave me a few words, people, if you enjoy. Or if you hate it. Either. I want to hear what you think.\*\*

When Claire wakes, she's alone between the pillows, and she smiles slightly to herself as she imagines Owen in the kitchen putting the coffee pot on or something, but when he doesn't come back into the room in a while she ventures out, tucking her robe around her, her nudity suddenly cold. He's not in the house, and he's not left so much as a note, and something doesn't sit right, but she doesn't think too much on it. She has some applications for storefront shops to trawl through and consider, and she supposes she'll do that to kill the time until Owen gets back from wherever he's gone.

He doesn't get in until late that evening, in the end, and she looks up as he walks through the door, expecting something to feel different. It doesn't, and with hindsight she'll realise that's because last night hasn't really changed a lot, has just culminated feelings that were already brewing, but in the moment it stalls her, and she doesn't say anything, for a moment. He smiles at her, seemingly half-heartedly, and pours himself a glass of water.

"I'm going to bed. I'm tired and I've got an early start in the morning. See you tomorrow evening, probably."

She has a thousand things to say in response to that, so many questions as to where he's been all day, why he let her wake up alone, when they're going to talk about it. She wants to sit beside him and smile and blush and tell him she spent almost an hour this morning cleaning the couch and reordering the coffee table at one end, and she wants to look up at him through hooded eyes and tell him she's aching in all the right places, she feels simultaneously exhausted and almost insatiably eager for more. But everything's happening so fast, and this is all so sudden, she doesn't say anything.

"Night." She gives him a little smile of her own, and watches him

walk into his own bedroom, not quite meeting her gaze.

\* \* \*

><p>He doesn't bring it up, and neither of them go to repeat it, and although he's not quite stand-offish with her, there's something not quite right. Their friendship doesn't flow with quite the ease it once did, but after a week or two they start laughing again, she feels comfortable, it's almost as if nothing happened.</p>

Claire has a deep, underlying sense of unease. The only conclusion she can draw is that he thought better of it the following day, and is hoping that in not mentioning it the whole concept will fade. But she doesn't feel she can let it fade, she still has vivid memories, often sudden and unexpected, of his mouth between her thighs, his body aligned with hers, the weight of him pressing her into the cushions of the couch, and the only feeling she had as she curled into his side and drifted off that night - how good it had been and how much she wanted it to happen again. But it's almost like he put a brick wall up sometime before her awakening the following morning, and there's no way for her to cross, climb or get around it. The thoughts knot themselves in her stomach, and she distances herself from him, slightly, too. She needs to condition herself to not remember him like that, to not want him, and certainly not to need him.

\* \* \*

><p>After a particularly terrible day at work, she comes home to Owen crashed out on the couch, beer in hand and football blaring in the background, and all of a sudden, something's got to give. She switches the television off at the wall, and as he makes a noise of protestation, takes the beer from his hand and sets it on the countertop, out of reach. He sits up, suddenly looking slightly sheepish, and she folds her arms.</p>

"Is this about that whites wash I was supposed to put on yesterday morning? I meant to, I'm sorry, I-"

She gives him an acid stare. "No, Owen. This is nothing to do with a whites wash."

He swallows, but doesn't say anything, reading something in her eyes that doesn't encourage him.

"Are we ever going to talk about what happened?"

He swallows again, and still remains silent.

"Are we ever going to talk about where we were, afterwards, what happened? I realise you regret it, but I-"

He laughs slightly, eyes suddenly looking tired. "Believe me, Claire, I regret nothingâ€!"

She frowns. "Then why did youâ€! why aren't we talking about it? Why are we acting like nothing happened when everything happened and I can't stop-" she looks toward the window, almost as if she's in pain.

He looks down, as if ashamed. "I thought you'd want to pretend nothing happened?"

"What?" she spins, eyes fiery. "You were the one that left me to wake up alone, you were the one that left the house for hours that day without telling me where you were going, you were the one thatâ€!" she trails off, frowning.

"You don't want me, Claire, I'm nothing like what you need. Iâ€! Iâ€! you deserve someone who's not going to drive you mad all the time, someone like you. Someone from the same world. Weâ€! both times anything's happened between us was in a high stress situation, you needed someone, anyoneâ€! and that's just who I am, I'm just anyoneâ€!"

She looks out the window pointedly, and then, when she looks at him again, she looks like there's something of \_disgust \_in her face.

"You think that's what I'm like?" She sounds hurt, more than anything.

"I didn't meanâ€!" he heaves a frustrated sigh. "God, you're infuriating-

"I'm infuriating? I'm the one who-"

He holds up a hand, and she stops for a moment, shocked at his seeming attempt to silence her. "I'm trying to be the one that steps away here, means you don't have to tell me I was just the one who was there when you needed someone, I'm admitting to myself I'm not the guy for you, I mean the sex was great; sometimes you just have needs, I get that, and I was thereâ€!"

She raises her eyes, runs a hand through her hair. "You drive me madâ€!"

He gives her a small, defeated smile. "Exactly. I'm never going to not be me, I'm never not going to be the guy that drives you crazyâ€! I love you enough to step back and let you find someone who's perfect, someone who makes you happy."

"What?" her face loses all its colour, and she takes a tiny, almost imperceptible step back. "One minute you reckon we're just a notch on each other's bedposts, and next you're saying something like thatâ€!"

He swallows, replaying his words in his head and feeling slightly nauseous. He \*\*had not \*\*meant to tell her that.

"Forget I said it. What I mean is-"

She shakes her head and looks down, like she can't meet his eyes. "You can't say something like that and take it back. Iâ€! don't I get to decide what I want? This perfect guy you're inventing for meâ€! what if I told you I choose you? I'mâ€! safe when I'm with you, I've \_needed \_you here all this time, I don't think I would have managed well on my own, after everythingâ€! Yeah, you used to drive me mad, you still do, most of the timeâ€! but that other little bit of time I find I can't imagine not having you hereâ€!"

He sighs, but his face softens somewhat. "But what if it's not always like that? What if you're still finding your way back from everything that happened, what if when everything's sorted you'll look back on this and realise I was just the protector, the safe guy, I was just the guy that ran from that \_thing \_with you, and it never meant anythingâ€|"

She meets his eyes then, and the tears start trickling down her cheeks. "I think it meant something before it even was anything, Owen. I thinkâ€| maybe we're no good on paper, maybe it doesn't make any sense that we should be togetherâ€| but maybe it's the other way round from what you're thinking. Maybe \_because \_we work under pressure, maybe because we pulled together when everything else was falling apartâ€| maybe that means for some unknown reason, we could hold."

He takes a tentative step towards her, taking a deep breath. She's still crying. He reaches out, shaking slightly, and puts his palm against her cheek.

"You think?"

She sniffs, and gives him a tiny smile through her tears. "I don't know, not really. And I'm terrified. But I guess we could go on being terrified together."

He runs his thumb ever so gently over her cheek. "You sure?"

She shakes her head at him, laughing through her tears. "One minute you tell me you love me, the next minute you don't seem to want to be with me-"

"I do. I just want to make sure you're sure. I want you to be happy."

She tilts her forehead, leaning it against his. "I'm surer about this than I've been about anything in a long time, Owen. I don't know why, really, and I'm not sure it's the safest decision I could makeâ€| but I thinkâ€| I think I've found I can't imagine my life without you in it anymoreâ€|"

There's something darker in his eyes now, and he sounds breathy. "I'm not going anywhere."

With that, his lips crash against hers. It's somewhere between the desperation of the first time and the comforting of the last time, but there's something else, too, something she suspects might be love. Suddenly, his hands are snaking down the front of her shirt, and his whole body's pressed against hers, and her breath hitches. She doesn't think could ever tire of this, of him. Gasping, she lets him take her by the hand and lead her through to her bedroom.

Almost reverently, he presses her into the pillows. And then his tongue's snaking along her collarbone and neither of them have as many clothes on as they had moments ago and she stops even thinking.

\* \* \*

><p>Exhausted, spent, she curls herself around him, propping her head up with her chin on his shoulder. He looks almost more exhausted, and she smiles.</p>

"Stay." She breathes, blushing a little and sliding her arm across his torso.

"I'm not going anywhere." He has one arm behind his head, and with the other hand he traces circles on her lower back. "Sleep. I promise I'll be here in the morning."

She presses her lips against his shoulder, and closes her eyes.

A long time later, when his breathing slows, she whispers, eyes still closed and arms still around him.

"I love you too."

The corner of his mouth turns up slightly.

\* \* \*

><p>The next morning, when Claire wakes, Owen's snoring lightly. She finds a tiny uncontrollable smile on her lips, and she attempts, albeit futilely, to roll him. However gently she nudges him, the snoring ceases and he cracks an eye open.</p>

"I thought you wanted me to stay. And now you're trying to push me out of bed!" he murmurs, sleep still thick in his voice. She meets his eyes, her smile widening.

"You were snoring."

He raises an eyebrow. "Not me. I never snore." He cranes forward and pushes his lips against hers. "Morning."

She sighs, leaning her forehead against his cheek. "Morning." His fingers run, ever so lightly, through her hair.

She rolls into him a little more, sliding her leg between his. She feels him swallow, she feels the beginning of his reaction to her. This time when his lips come down to hers, there's more fire behind them. Suddenly she feels his other hand on her hip, and he's pulling her closer.

He pulls back, breathless, and leans his head against hers. "I've just woken up, woman. Give me a chance."

She chuckles, and it sounds so free and fresh and easy his heart swells a little.

"I'm not afraid anymore!"

\*\*That's a wrap! Hope you enjoyed, I would love to hear from you, just to know what you thought, in as few words as you want!\*\*

End  
file.